

June 14, 2001

EPA Proposes to Add San Antonio Site to Federal Cleanup Priorities List

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposes to add the R&H Oil Company site near downtown San Antonio, Texas, to the federal Superfund National Priorities List (NPL), EPA and Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC) announced today. Uncontrolled spills of petroleum-related waste at the site have contaminated shallow ground water beneath the facility.

"Adding this site to the Superfund list makes federal dollars available, allowing EPA and the TNRCC to speed their cleanup and meet the agencies' commitment to protect public health and our environment," EPA Regional Administrator Gregg Cooke said.

TNRCC Chairman Robert J. Huston said, "The TNRCC stands ready to assist the EPA in addressing problem sites such as this one. Continued cooperation between our agencies is essential to clean up all contaminated properties, particularly those located in environmentally sensitive areas of our state."

R & H Oil Company site is an abandoned refinery and gasoline blending facility located at 403 Somerset Road, approximately 6.5 miles southwest of downtown San Antonio.

As early as 1938 and through 1978, petroleum refining operations produced several petroleum products including gasoline, fuel oils, and ink oil. The site was also used as a gasoline blending facility from March 1988 through April 1989. The property was abandoned sometime after April 1989.

Sludge and tar-like material remain in and around 40 above ground storage tanks ranging in capacity from 5,000 to 400,000 gallons. Dozens of 55-gallon drums contain combustible or flammable liquids, acid, oil and water mixtures, and chlorinated solvents.

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R&H Oil Company NPL Proposal

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A plume of contaminated ground water has been identified in the shallow alluvial aquifer beneath the R&H Oil Company site. The majority of the plume underlies the former facility property.

Although the contaminated alluvial aquifer is not currently used as a potable water supply, it is underlain by the Edwards aquifer. The Edwards is a karst aquifer and one of the most permeable and productive carbonate aquifers in the United States. EPA has designated it as a "sole source" water supply for the city of San Antonio. EPA's primary objective in listing the site is protection of the Edwards aquifer.

The EPA Superfund program works closely with state agencies to clean and restore uncontrolled contaminated properties. Superfund cleans sites when the work required is beyond the resources of state and local agencies.

EPA will seek public comments for 60 days on adding this site to the NPL. Those comments will be addressed before the Agency makes the final decision about adding the site to the NPL. During this public comment period, the Agency will continue to develop cleanup plans so that actual work may begin as quickly after NPL listing as possible.

The public comment period will end on August 13, 2001. More information on making comments is available on the EPA web site at

http://www.epa.gov/superfund/programs/npl_hrs/pubcom.htm.

Additional information about the R&H Oil Company site is available on the EPA web site at <http://www.epa.gov/superfund/new/newnpl.htm>.

In the past, the R&H Oil Company site has also been referred to as the Eldorado Refining and Marketing, Inc. site and the Tropicana Energy site.

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